

Discussion Questions for Community Workshop:

Single Family Homes & Tree Regulations



1. ***Single Family House Size.*** Should the City increase the maximum allowable house size, up to say 5,000 sq. ft., which is considerably less than neighboring communities that do have a floor area maximum (most do not). Should adjustments to this maximum be made downward based on lot size and slope? Alternately, should a sliding scale be considered where the maximum allowable house size is different for lots larger than 10,000 sq. ft. or 20,000 sq. ft.?
2. ***House Design and Neighborhood “Fit”.*** Should there be additional standards for larger homes with tall walls and vaulted roofs, for example, and additions, particularly on the second floor, to prevent homes from looking too bulky? Should some standards be relaxed to allow for limited projections into yards and continuation of existing nonconforming setbacks?
3. ***Parking.*** What can the City do to make sure there is adequate parking? Allow for carports to meet the requirement of a “covered” space? Adjust the parking requirements so they are based on the number of bedrooms and on the number of cars most people usually own? Do these ideas make sense? What else should be done?
4. ***Trees.*** How can the City provide better protection for its most valuable trees – its native, healthy, safe, and large diameter trees? Should the list of protected trees be limited to Heritage Trees (Coast Live Oak, Valley Oak, Redwood, Madrone, Bay Laurel and Buckeye) and Large Diameter Trees? Should the city have standards that make it easier to remove non-native, invasive trees, dead and dying trees, trees that are fire hazards, and trees that are unsafe? What else should be done?
5. ***Second Units.*** In order to comply with State law, Conditional Use Permits will only be required if the lot is less than 5,000 square feet in size. Do you support reducing the maximum size of a second unit (from today’s limit of 1,200 sq. ft. to 1,000 sq. ft.) but allowing it to be a larger percentage of the existing home (up to say 40%)?
6. ***Single Family Design Review – Improving the Process.*** The City wants to create fair, equitable and predictable review procedures that also recognize the differences in impacts among projects. One way to do this is with a “tiering” system, allowing small scale, ground-floor projects to be reviewed at the staff level (Tier 1) but require notice and Zoning Administrator review for larger ground floor additions and small upper-floor additions (Tier 2), and Planning Commission review of new homes and larger additions (Tier 3). Objective criteria would be set so everyone would know what the rules are. Neighborhood input will be welcomed, and notice required for any addition or new construction of more 400 square feet. Do you support this tiering concept? Are there ways you would refine it to make it more fair?